



# Rock Talk

The Official Newsletter of the Withlacoochee Rockhounds

## This brooch became high fashion during the late Viking and Middle Ages

Objects can often look a bit like lumps of dirt with something in them when brought into the conservation labs for further analysis. Among a variety of finds from the excavation project 'Intercity Sørli-Åkersvika' in Stange in Eastern Norway, conservator Margrethe Felter didn't have trouble distinguishing the type of jewellery she had just X-rayed.

"We could see straightaway the decorative shape of the Urnes brooch and possible gilding," she writes in a post on the Facebook-page of the Museum of Cultural History in Oslo.

After radiography, the conservator can start removing the dirt.

"This is one of the most satisfying parts of being an archaeological conservator," Felter writes



### This Month's Roundup of Stories

- [Viking Brooch](#)
- [Secretary's Report](#)
- [Rocks and Minerals Pacific NW](#)
- [What The Heck Is That??](#)
- [Agate is Actually an Egg](#)
- [Arkansas Diamond Crater Find](#)
- [Bench Tips](#)

The Urnes brooch pictured here was found in the topsoil. During the Viking and Middle age, people would sometimes hide their valuables for safekeeping, or deposit them as offers to the gods. In this case however, no other similar items were found nearby. The archaeologists therefore believe that somebody may have simply lost it here.

Underneath the topsoil during the excavations at the two farmssteads Næsten and Guåker in Stange, the archaeologists found traces of settlements dating back 4000 years.

"The brooch might well have belonged to one of the people who ran the large and important farm here during the early Middle Ages," McGraw suggests.

Read the entire article at [ScienceNorway.no](https://www.sciencenorway.no)

Clubhouse Address:  
3357 Susan Dr.  
Spring Hill, FL 34606

# Secretary's Report

## *Minutes and More from Club Secretary - Melodye Steverson*

### *Withlacoochee Rockhounds Monthly Meeting Meeting Minutes Date 4-12-23*

The meeting was called to order by President Judith Birx at 7:04m.

We all stood for the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence.

There was 1 new member to recognize: Killian O'Donnell. There were two guests in attendance: Jenn Pointer and her husband.

Roger Wheeler made a motion to accept the minutes of our March meeting as printed in the newsletter, Carla Howell seconded. Passed by all members.

Treasurer Janet Wheeler gave the Treasurer's report. Roberta Oldread made a motion to accept the Treasurer's report. Seconded by Patty Motzer.

President Birx began with announcements:

#### *Old Business -*

She reported on the status of the reinstatement of the club's non-profit status with the IRS. She told those in attendance that the Board of Directors had decided to hire an accountant who is familiar with non-profits such as our club, as the club has had difficulties in getting proper answers from the IRS. The Board hopes an accountant with experience in working with non-profits will be able to help us get this issue resolved more quickly. We have an appointment on May 12th to begin discussions with him.

She then announced that Silversmithing classes with be resuming on May 6th, at the clubhouse. She told the members in attendance that the sign-up sheets were at the front of the room, and if you wanted to take the classes, to sign up. She deferred to club VP Janice Wojcik, who will be teaching the classes for further details. Janice related that we had enough people who signed up for Silversmithing 1, and Silversmithing 2, that they would be teaching both on the 12th. She also noted that payment for the classes was due that night. All who were signed up paid their class fee.

This was asked since there had been some individuals sign up, and then not show up for the class. This left an open space that another person could have used. Janice announced the classes were fully booked.

#### *New Business -*

President Birx announced that the club now owns a new Pixie polishing machine. This gives the club three working machines, and an additional one that is being repaired. Carla Howell volunteered to try to find a motor to repair this machine. With more machines working, our cabbng classes can go forward.

Club VP Janice Wojcik announced that next month's program would be "What The Heck Is This?" Members were encouraged to bring no more than 2 rocks or fossils, etc., and those with knowledge of what it might be could give you their opinion. We'll be sharing our knowledge.

Carla Howell volunteered to begin teaching wire wrapping classes. She will work out when the classes will be held. More information when it is finalized.

Lynn Walters made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Hunter Mellring seconded, passed by all.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:25pm.

*Minutes respectfully submitted by Michael Steverson.*

*There are no Board of Director minutes, as there has been no Board of Directors meeting at the time of this newsletter being published.*





# 9 Rocks and Minerals Found in The Pacific Northwest

## Go West, young Rockhound!

The Pacific Northwest is a beautiful area, but just underneath the soil also lies a collection of beautiful rocks, gems, and minerals ranging from elemental gold to green petrified wood. Most people in the region know there are some good rocks around, but it's always a matter of being able to find them.

So, let's take a big look at some of the hits from across the region with our list of rocks and minerals found in the Pacific Northwest.

1. Oregon Sunstone - Oregon Sunstone is a plagioclase feldspar variant. While ordinary sunstone occurs in large masses, Oregon Sunstone is generally found as large single crystals. These crystals have a wide variance in color, but they all share a schiller effect similar to labradorite. The end result is a world-class gem, always found in one part of Oregon.

2. Obsidian - Obsidian is technically not a mineral, since it lacks any sort of internal crystalline structure. Instead, the famous black rock is a glass. The properties of obsidian lend it well to being a cutting tool, namely the clean conchoidal flakes that break off when it's struck. These flakes can have incredibly thin edges, for a brief time obsidian can make a razor look dull.



3. Petrified Wood - Petrified wood is found in many places, but the colors and type depend on the locality. For the most part, petrified wood ends up being a brown or red color and is sometimes found as an entire limb cast. The minerals contained inside are usually opal or chalcedony, or a combination of the two. Different impurities in the ancient silica-bearing waters can lead to some striking results, however.

4. Jade - Jade is present across this entire area, and even a bit south. Jade was once used as a simple descriptor for any stone that was green and could be worked, but nowadays it refers to two members of the pyroxene series. These are nephrite and jadeite respectively. Jadeite is incredibly rare, most jade found in this area is nephrite.

5. Opal - Opal is an amorphous form of silica, comprised of microscopic spheres stacked in complex arrangements. It comes in two main varieties, precious and common. Precious opal is what most people think of when they hear the word, with a scintillating internal fire that changes as the stone is turned. Common opal is generally less impressive, lacking fire but sometimes showing great color patterns.

6. Quartz/Amethyst - Quartz is the macrocrystalline form of silica, made up of six-sided crystals with a pyramidal termination. This iconic crystal has long left the hands of only those who collect stones and the crystal points are a common find in all sorts of shops, not just those that sell rocks. Quartz has fascinated humanity since ancient times. It must have been a truly odd material to find in the time before glass was common.

7. Agate/Jasper/Chalcedony - Agate, jasper, and chalcedony are all intimately intertwined minerals. All three are a form of chalcedony, which is a complex intergrowth of quartz and moganite on a microscopic level.

Read the entire article at [RockSeeker.com](http://RockSeeker.com)

# What the Heck is it!



## **I don't know. What do you think it is?**

Maybe we'll find out at our May 10th, 2023 Withlacoochee Rockhounds meeting.

You are encouraged to bring 2 of your rocks, gems, slabs or fossils that you have no idea what they are. Fellow members will help in the identification with books, references and sharing personal knowledge.

We have plenty of experts in the club so we'll all put our heads together to discover the names of your mystery specimens.

*(We all have a million unidentified rocks & fossils but please only 2 per person!)*





# "Rock" Containing Stunning Agate Turns Out To Be 60-Million-Year-Old Dinosaur Egg

## It's an Eggite!

Back in 1883, a pretty agate mineral was registered to the Natural History Museum's Mineralogy Collection. Around 15 centimeters (6 inches) across, almost completely spherical but otherwise unassuming, the specimen has remained in the collection for the last 175 years, until a chance finding revealed it to be a dinosaur egg.

The specimen's pretty colors of light pink and white interior caught the eye of Robin Hansen, one of the Mineral Curators at the museum who helped prepare the specimen when it was selected to go on display in 2018. Then a trip to a mineral show in France helped reveal the significance of the rock.

'While I was looking around the show, a dealer showed me an agatized dinosaur egg, which was spherical, had a thin rind, and dark agate in the middle,' recounts Hansen in a statement. "That was the lightbulb moment when I thought: 'Hang on a minute, that looks a lot like the one we've just put on display in the Museum!'"

The mineral was then inspected by dinosaur experts at the museum who decided to run a CT scan on the specimen to see what clues they could unveil.

Unfortunately, the density of the agate meant the CT scan could not pick out any finer details. On the plus side, the team agreed that the thin layer around the agate looked like a shell, and found that the outside of the specimen suggested that more than one object had been gathered together.

Furthermore, the specimen was collected in India and the size, shape, and surface features are the same as those of other specimens of titanosaur eggs from China and Argentina. The egg is thought to date back to 60 million years ago when titanosaurs were the most common dinosaurs living in India. Titanosaurs, despite their massive size, were thought to have laid clutches of around 30-40 eggs and had no parental care involvement with their offspring.

Read the entire article at [IFLScience.com](https://www.iflscience.com)



# The Quartz Seemed Extra Shiny. It Wasn't Quartz

Truly, a diamond in the rough.

More than 75,000 diamonds have been found at Arkansas' Crater of Diamonds State Park over the past century or so, with more than 120 emerging from the earth this year alone. Park regular David Anderson just added one more to the mix, and he's already got a name for it: BUD. "That's for Big, Ugly Diamond," the Murfreesboro native says of the 3.29-carat mottled brown specimen he uncovered earlier this month, the park's largest diamond discovery since September 2021, per an Arkansas State Parks statement.

Anderson, who has found hundreds of diamonds in the park since first hearing about it on the Travel Channel in 2007, says he was wet-sifting dirt in the park's nearly 40-acre search area on March 4 when he found the pitted gem. "At first I thought it was quartz but wondered why it was so shiny," he says. "Once I picked it up, I realized it was a diamond." "Mr. Anderson's diamond is about the size of an English pea, with a light brown color and octahedron shape," park interpreter Tayler Markham explains. "It has a metallic shine typical of all diamonds found at the park, with a partially resorbed surface and lots of inclusions." Markham notes that, for the most part, the diamonds found in the park have smooth, rounded edges due to the volcanic eruption process that brought them to the surface. The park has also produced the largest diamond ever uncovered in the United States: the 40.23-carat "Uncle Sam" white diamond, found in 1924 and now residing in the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History in DC.

Read the entire article at [Newser.com](https://www.newser.com)



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## Field Trips

**"Note: The Withlacoochee Rockhounds Club does not sponsor field trips other than trips that are sanctioned by the SFMS (The Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies).**

**Our club insurance is through SFMS and does not cover excursions not listed on their website as safe."**



# Dig Your Own Amethyst Crystals: The Diamond Willow Mine Offers a Unique Experience!

Ontario is set to welcome a world of wonder and discovery for gem enthusiasts and adventurers alike, as the Diamond Willow Amethyst Mine opens its gates next month for the pick-your-own amethyst experience. Nestled in the picturesque landscape of northeastern Ontario near Thunder Bay, this family-owned mine offers visitors the unique opportunity to fill their buckets with glistening amethysts straight from the source.

For those ready to embark on their own amethyst-hunting adventure, the Rock Store on-site provides all the necessary equipment. Visitors can purchase a two-gallon pail for a mere \$30 and fill it to the brim with radiant stones from designated picking areas throughout the mine. Remarkably, there is no admission fee to enter this enchanting realm, allowing treasure seekers to explore the grounds free of charge.

Read the entire article at [RockSeeker.com](https://www.rockseeker.com)



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## 'Dream' hoard of 1000-year-old Viking coins discovered by amateurs on a metal-detector vacation

A group of hobby metal detectorists discovered a hoard of Viking silver near the ruins of the Viking castle Fyrkat, in Hobro, North Denmark.

The trove contained over 300 items, including Danish, German and Arab coins, as well as silver balls, and a ring pin. The find — made in autumn last year — dates back to the 900s, when King Harald "Bluetooth" (Blåtand) Gormsson, who united Denmark and Norway. His nickname, the result of a prominent dead tooth, inspired the widely used wireless technology between electronic devices, according to The Viking Herald.

Archaeologist and museum inspector at North Jutland Museums Torben Trier Christiansen told Danish news site TV2 Nord that "there is no doubt" that the coins are linked to the king, adding, "We are looking forward to delving into that history."

Christiansen said in a statement that the discovery was "a fantastic story" but to find them abandoned in a settlement only a few miles Haralds Blåtand's Viking fortress Fyrkat was "incredibly exciting."

The three people who discovered the treasure trove — Jane Foged-Mønster, Louise Stahlschmidt and Mette Norre Bækgaard — told TV2 Nord that they had been on a metal-detector holiday when they made their amazing discovery.

Read the entire article at [BusinessInsider.com](https://www.businessinsider.com)



# Some images from Leslie's Fossil Presentation



**Withlacoochee Rockhounds**

Our monthly club meeting is held at the Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens Club, 3357 Susan Dr., Spring Hill, FL 34606, on the 2nd Wednesday of each month from 7:00 to 9:00 PM



[www.withlacoocheerockhounds.com](http://www.withlacoocheerockhounds.com)

**Your Business Card Size Ad in Rock Talk**

The cost for non-club members to advertise their businesses in Rock Talk is \$10.00 per month. Contact Michael Steverson to set up an ad in both the newsletter and the club website. It will benefit both your business and our club.

**Advertisers Needed**

Please help us find advertisers for the Rock Talk and our website. The club can use the monthly income. Both the Rock Talk and our website have more exposure than only club members

Contact club treasure Janet Wheeler: [ceegirl@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:ceegirl@tampabay.rr.com) or send to: Withlacoochee Rockhounds, PO Box 5634, Spring Hill, FL 34611-5634

**Withlacoochee Rockhounds**

**Purpose**

We are a non-profit organization whose purpose is to foster interest and promote knowledge of minerals, gems, fossils, lapidary arts, and earth sciences, through regular meetings, informative programs, workshops, and field trips. PLUS, our annual gem, mineral and jewelry show.

Membership is open to anyone sharing such interests.

**Dues**

Dues are \$35.00 annually for adults, and \$5.00 for children under 18 years of age.

**Club Meeting Location and time**

Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens Center, 3357 Susan Dr in Spring Hill. The meetings are held the second Wednesday of the month at 7:00PM

**2023 Club Officers and Appointees**

President	Judith Birx	352.587.1702	<a href="mailto:judithbirx@hotmail.com">judithbirx@hotmail.com</a>
Vice President	Janice Wojcik	813.677.6263	<a href="mailto:jfwojcik@verizon.net">jfwojcik@verizon.net</a>
Secretary	Melodye Steverson	352.683.9496	<a href="mailto:melodye@designsbymelodye.com">melodye@designsbymelodye.com</a>
Treasurer	Janet Wheeler	727.938.3644	<a href="mailto:ceegirl@tampabay.rr.com">ceegirl@tampabay.rr.com</a>
Rock Talk Editor	Michael Steverson	407.376.5570	<a href="mailto:highlander56@gmail.com">highlander56@gmail.com</a>
Club Webmaster	Michael Steverson	407.376.5570	<a href="mailto:highlander56@gmail.com">highlander56@gmail.com</a>
Mailing Reporter	Janet Wheeler	727.938.3644	<a href="mailto:ceegirl@tampabay.rr.com">ceegirl@tampabay.rr.com</a>
Gem Bag Coordinator	Gloria DuPont	352.848.5199	<a href="mailto:ddupont@tampabay.rr.com">ddupont@tampabay.rr.com</a>
Audio/Visual Coordinator	Michael Steverson	407.376.5570	<a href="mailto:highlander56@gmail.com">highlander56@gmail.com</a>

**Board of Directors**

Judith Birx (President)	Janice Wojcik (Vice President)	Melodye Steverson (Secretary)	Janet Wheeler (Treasurer)
Roberta Oldread	Leslie Newberry	Roger Wheeler	Michael Steverson
			Ralph Barber (Past President)





## Bench Tips from Brad Smith

Brad Smith's *Bench Tips* are a monthly feature of Rock Talk

### DRILLING SMALL ITEMS

Small pieces need to be held securely while drilling to prevent them from spinning if the drill catches. Having sliced my fingers occasionally in my younger days, I avoid band-aids now by using flat-jaw pliers or a ring clamp. Pliers also save you if the piece gets hot. Put a little tape over the plier jaws if needed to avoid scratches.



### DRILLING A STONE

One of the things my students often ask to do is drill a hole through a piece of gemstone. The usual thought is to get a diamond drill, but I've been disappointed with them. I think the reason is that the tip of the drill is just pivoting in the hole and fails to cut well. When it looks like the drill isn't cutting, the tendency is to push with more force. The drill gets hot, and the diamond grit falls off.

A much better approach is to use a core drill. This is a small hollow tube with a coating of diamond grit at the business end. The diamonds easily carve out a circular arc without undue pressure or heat buildup.

Core drills are readily available from lapidary and jewelry supply companies. They come in sizes as small as 1mm and are very reasonable in price. For instance, a 2mm diameter drill is about \$6.

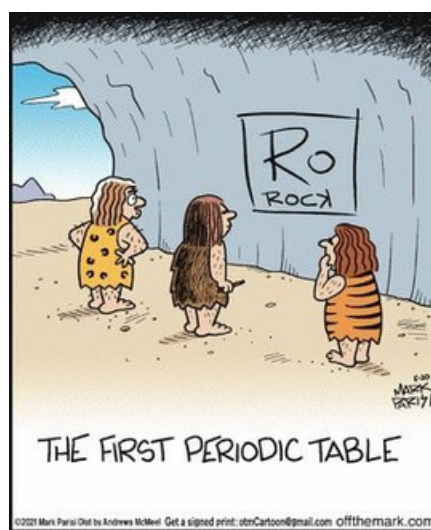
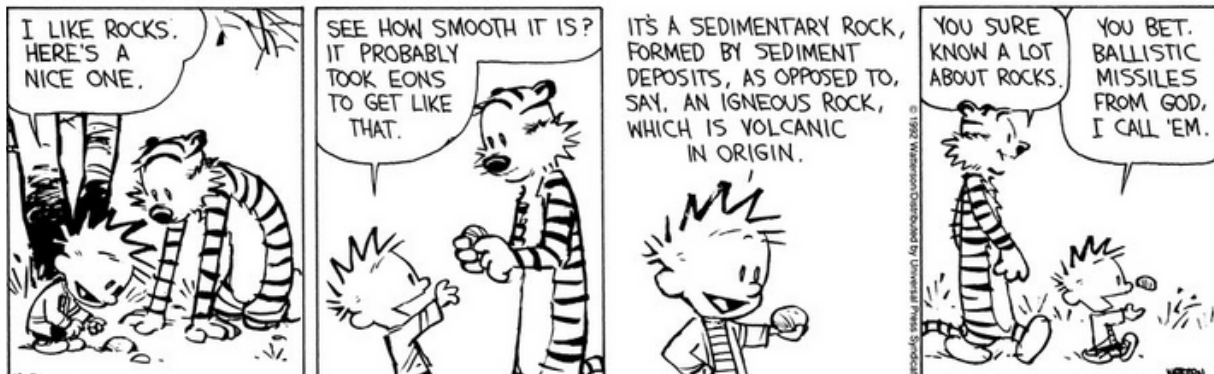
Chuck the core drill in a drill press, Dremel or Foredom and be sure to keep the drilling zone wet to cool the tool and to flush out debris. Also, if you're drilling a through hole, go very easy on the pressure as the drill is about to cut through. Otherwise you will usually chip off some of the stone surface around the hole.



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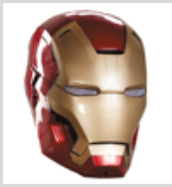
# Rock Talk Funny Papers



**IT'S OKAY IF YOU DON'T LIKE LAPIDARY IT'S KIND OF A SMART PEOPLE HOBBY ANYWAY**

**I SUFFER FROM**  
**≡O.L.D≡**  
  
**OBSESSIVE LAPIDARY DISORDER**





## From The Editor

### Hello to all Withlacoochee Rockhounds

It is I, your friendly neighborhood editor again.

If you missed our April 2023 meeting, you missed Pleistocene Florida Fossils! Club, and Board member Leslie Newberry gave us an interesting presentation about the creatures that inhabited Florida during the Pleistocene era, and the fossils they left behind.

Do NOT miss this month's meeting. It's "What the Heck Is It?? Members are encourage to bring up to two rocks, fossils, etc. that they do not know what they might be to the meeting. We'll be using "wisdom of the crowd" to help you determine what your items are. Take advantage of the combined knowledge of the club's members.

All of you should have received an e-mail regarding membership renewal. We are now into 2023, and your dues for the new year are due. You can pay them at the meeting. You can mail them into the address on the membership form. Or as an added convenience this year, your membership renewal e-mail has a link where you can pay for your membership via credit card. No muss, no fuss. Any member who has not paid their 2023 dues is not considered a member at this time. It is imperative that your membership dues are paid. They help us pay for club functions, and more!

If you would like to place a business card ad in the newsletter, please feel free to contact me, and we'll get you added to the next available issue.

Additionally, if any of you have not received your newsletter or are not receiving my e-mail blasts (meetings, rock sales, etc.), *please* check your spam folder. If you are still are not receiving them, please contact me, and let's make sure I have your correct e-mail address. I have a few of you who unsubscribed from the mailings. I cannot add you back to the list. You have to subscribe to get back on the list. It's a permissions thing.

Our Board would like our members to come up with suggestions for programs to be presented at our monthly meetings. What would you like to see? What would you like to learn? What would you like to know? Is there something you'd like to teach or present? You can help our club expand its educational repertoire. We'd love to hear from you all.

Contact any Board member or bring your written suggestions to a meeting.

Rock On!!!

Club Phone Number - 352.587.2714

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### Warning to Withlacoochee Rockhound Members

*During the last several months, illicit requests have been sent to members of various clubs in the US, including the Withlacoochee Rockhounds, asking members to purchase gift cards that would be used as donations to various organizations.*

*These are SCAMS.*


*Be advised that our club has never and will never ask members to buy gift cards or provide any form of monetary funds to anyone or any organization by phone call, email, or any other method of communication.*

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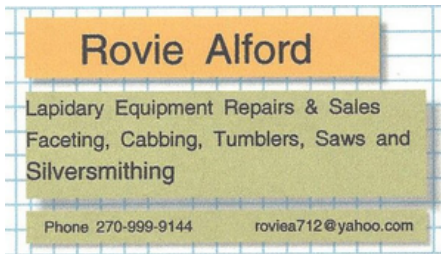
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The cost for non-club members to advertise their businesses in  
Rock Talk is \$10.00 per month.

Contact Michael Stevenson to set up an ad in both the newsletter and  
the club website. It will benefit both  
your business and our club.

If you ad has a web address, or Etsy shop address, I have linked to it.

## Advertisers Are Needed

Please help us find advertisers for the Rock Talk and our website.

The monthly income from these ads is beneficial to the club.

Both the Rock Talk and our website have more exposure than only club members.

Contact club treasurer Janet Wheeler: [ceecgirl@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:ceecgirl@tampabay.rr.com) or

send to:

Withlacoochee Rockhounds

PO Box 5634 Spring Hill, FL 34611-5634



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# Withlacoochee Rockhounds

## Membership Form

### 2023

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Annual Dues:      Individual member, \$35.00.      Under 18 years of age, \$5.00

Check if returning member

Check if current member  
with change of information

Check if new member

Check if under 18

**Please Print Clearly**

Last name

First Name

Street Address:

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Phone Number (s)

Email address:

You may now fill in the fields on this form if you are viewing it on your computer or tablet.  
Each field may be clicked on and then you may type in your information.  
You will still need to print out the form, but your added information should show on the form.

**Give this completed form along with your check for dues made out to "Withlacoochee Rockhounds" to club secretary Janet Wheeler at a club meeting. Or mail the form and your check to:**

Withlacoochee Rockhounds  
PO Box 5634  
Spring Hill, FL 34611-5634

2022